

An aerial photograph of a city grid, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The image shows a dense arrangement of buildings and streets, with a prominent diagonal road cutting through the center. The text 'master plan framework' is written in white, lowercase letters in the bottom right corner.

master plan framework

OAKWOOD
CEMETERY

MAYO
FIELD

ZUMBRO RIVER

CIVIC CENTER DRIVE

CENTRAL
PARK

SOLDIER'S
MEMORIAL
FIELD

CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN



Master Plan Framework

The Master Plan framework establishes the foundation for future development in Downtown Rochester. The key elements of the framework build on the many facets of Downtown Rochester that will lend the City its unique character and should be preserved, enhanced, or—in some cases—re-imagined in order to create an enduring and vibrant downtown that is flexible and can accommodate future development proposals. The Master Plan framework is composed of several parts: a **districts framework** that envisions the specific mix of land uses that makes up each distinct area of downtown; an **urban design framework** that defines the urban form of the City by giving shape to the public realm through building massing, density, and the scale of streets; and an **open space framework** that sets the landscape character and helps define priority investments for streets, the river, trails, open spaces, and plazas. The **mobility framework** explores the unique relationship between transportation and land use and balances an increasing number of mobility options—from transit to pedestrians and bikes to single occupancy vehicles—replacing priorities that privilege one mode at another’s expense. And, finally, the **sustainability framework** ties together these components to achieve a plan that is not only environmentally sustainable and climatically appropriate, but also socially and economically sustainable.

Design Principles

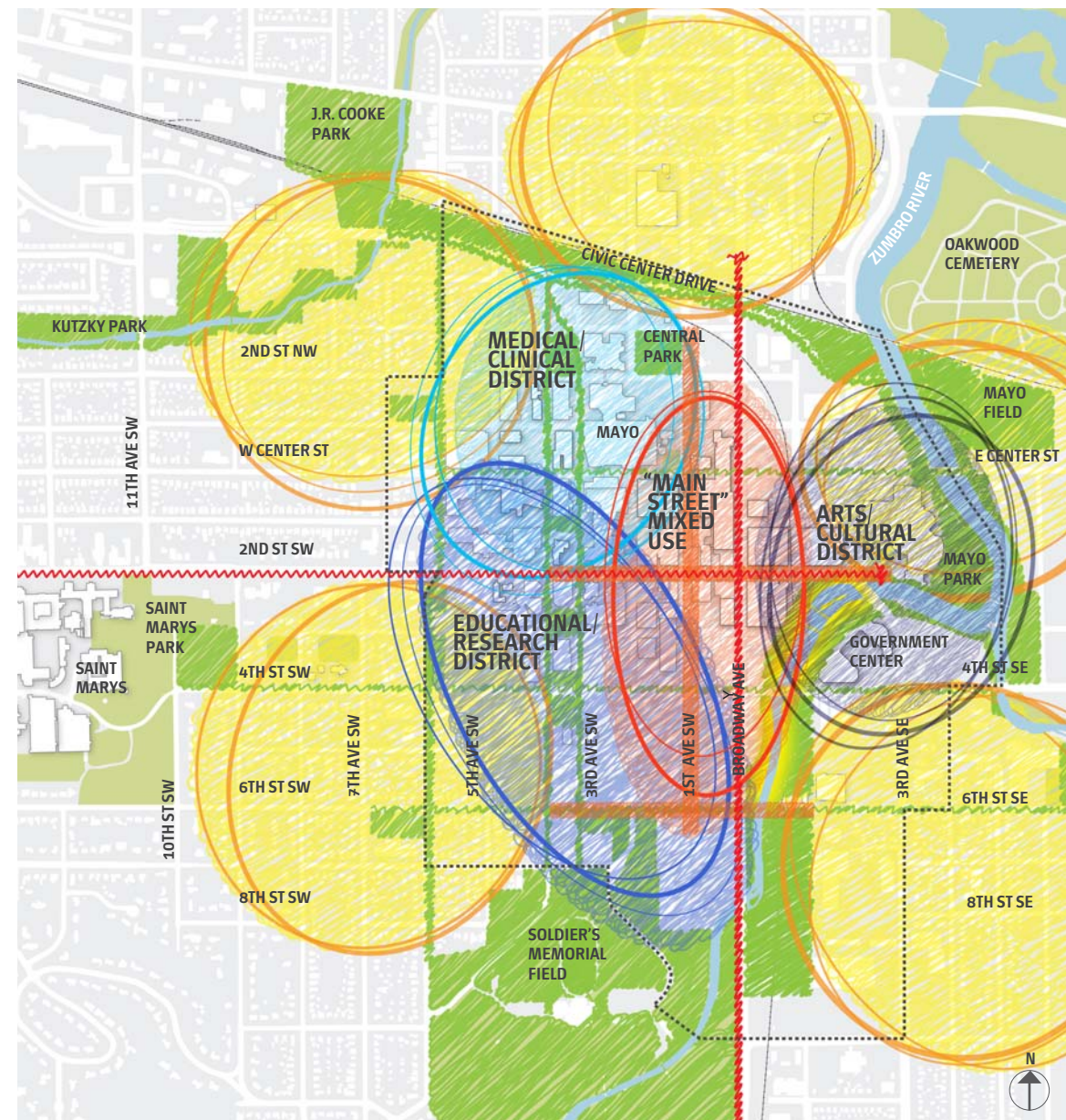
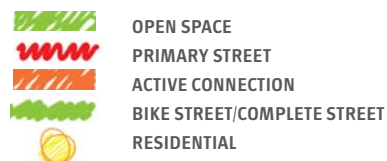
Developed through community input and under the guidance of the Rochester Downtown Plan Technical Team and Steering Committee, the planning and design principles reflect conversations with stakeholders, the diagnosis of current issues, and an understanding of the overwhelming potential that lies ahead for downtown Rochester. The following principles directed the development of the master plan and the prioritization of its initiatives:

- Create a vibrant, **economically healthy** downtown that is **walkable, livable** and promotes **human** interaction
- Create **strong connections** between major activity centers including the **CBD, UMR, and the Mayo Clinic**
- Promote mobility options that **reduce dependency on automobile**
- Create **pedestrian friendly streets** that balance use by people and automobiles
- Build upon **historic** buildings and **landmarks** that contribute to Rochester’s history and culture
- Establish a connected **open space system including the river**
- Create strong connections between **indoor and outdoor spaces at street level, subway, and skyway**
- Develop buildings that **engage the street**, shape the **civic realm** and **minimize energy use**

Districts Framework

Vibrant downtown areas often are successful because of their easy walkability within a compact area. Rather than dilute the strength and pedestrian-friendly scale of an individual zone by extending its size to encompass the entire downtown, another approach is to create sub-districts, each one with a strong identity developed out of its own geography and unique opportunities. Each of these districts can develop into compact walkable areas in their own right. The master plan guides Rochester's growth into a Downtown with four mixed use development districts, each with a unique development fabric, urban character, land use mix that create synergies between uses and support Rochester's competitive advantage. Downtown is defined by four major zones: an **Education and Research District**; a **"Main Street"/Mixed Use District**; an **Arts/Cultural District**, and the **Medical/Clinical District** that add to the current sense of a Downtown district and to the existing **Downtown Residential Neighborhoods**.

With strong connections between the districts along key streets, the river, and strategic open spaces, these distinct areas create new destinations for visitors to downtown, opportunities to explore a more richly varied and interesting downtown, with multiple centers or hearts of activity. While each district locates the highest mix of commercial uses closest to the core of downtown, it also builds on existing planning work and individual neighborhood vision plans to continue developing linkages into the adjacent neighborhoods by transitioning with mixed use residential and supporting uses at the edges. In all districts, new multifamily residential infill development at these edges provides a transition from existing neighborhoods to downtown uses.



DISTRICT PLAN

Education and Research District

The Education and Research District contains the highest mix of office, research and academic uses that support the Mayo Clinic operations, as well as UMR research needs, partnership ventures, and space for other downtown employers. Innovative partnerships between medical practice, research and education will be fostered by sharing space and the adjacencies created by concentrating these creative uses within a tight, geographic area. Active uses are located on the ground levels of buildings—particularly along the key landscaped 3rd and 4th Avenue corridors, with commercial offices located above. While Mayo Clinic offices currently occupy many ground level spaces, these uses will be replaced over time by more active uses. Residential will also be in the mix, and will be concentrated toward the west edge of the Education and Research District. Although mixed use often implies retail at the ground level, it can also include active uses such as visible lobbies and more semi-public uses that are appropriate for this District.

“Main Street”/Mixed Use District

Building on the scale and vitality of 1st Avenue and the future potential of a UMR campus near Soldier’s Memorial Field, the “Main Street”/Mixed Use District will take advantage of nearby parks and the river as well as pedestrian-scaled buildings and streets, to foster a walkable, active mixed use district reminiscent of many historic downtown Main Streets. The 1st Avenue spine will connect two anchors of downtown from the existing employment core at 2nd Street and 1st Avenue south to the future UMR campus. Retail growth, especially at the ground level, will be focused in this district along 1st Avenue to enhance the City’s Urban Village concept, take advantage of consumer needs from future students, staff, and faculty at UMR, and build on the active street edges, historic structures, and pedestrian-friendly environments. Upper level residential and small commercial offices are also envisioned for this Main Street corridor, and will provide a site for testing new housing typologies in the downtown. A new bridge across the Zumbro River at 6th Street will create the necessary connectivity to a future residential mixed use development on the east side of the river.

Arts/Cultural District

The establishment of a new Arts District at the confluence of 2nd Street, Civic Center Drive, and the Zumbro River offers an opportunity to spur revitalization of the river corridor, beginning in this zone. The Arts/Cultural District builds on the energies of existing civic, cultural, and arts uses. Many cities have seen that investment in and development of an identity for an arts district can bring vitality to a downtown sub-district. While there are already many active arts and cultural organizations throughout downtown Rochester, the definition of a district gives them an identifiable home,

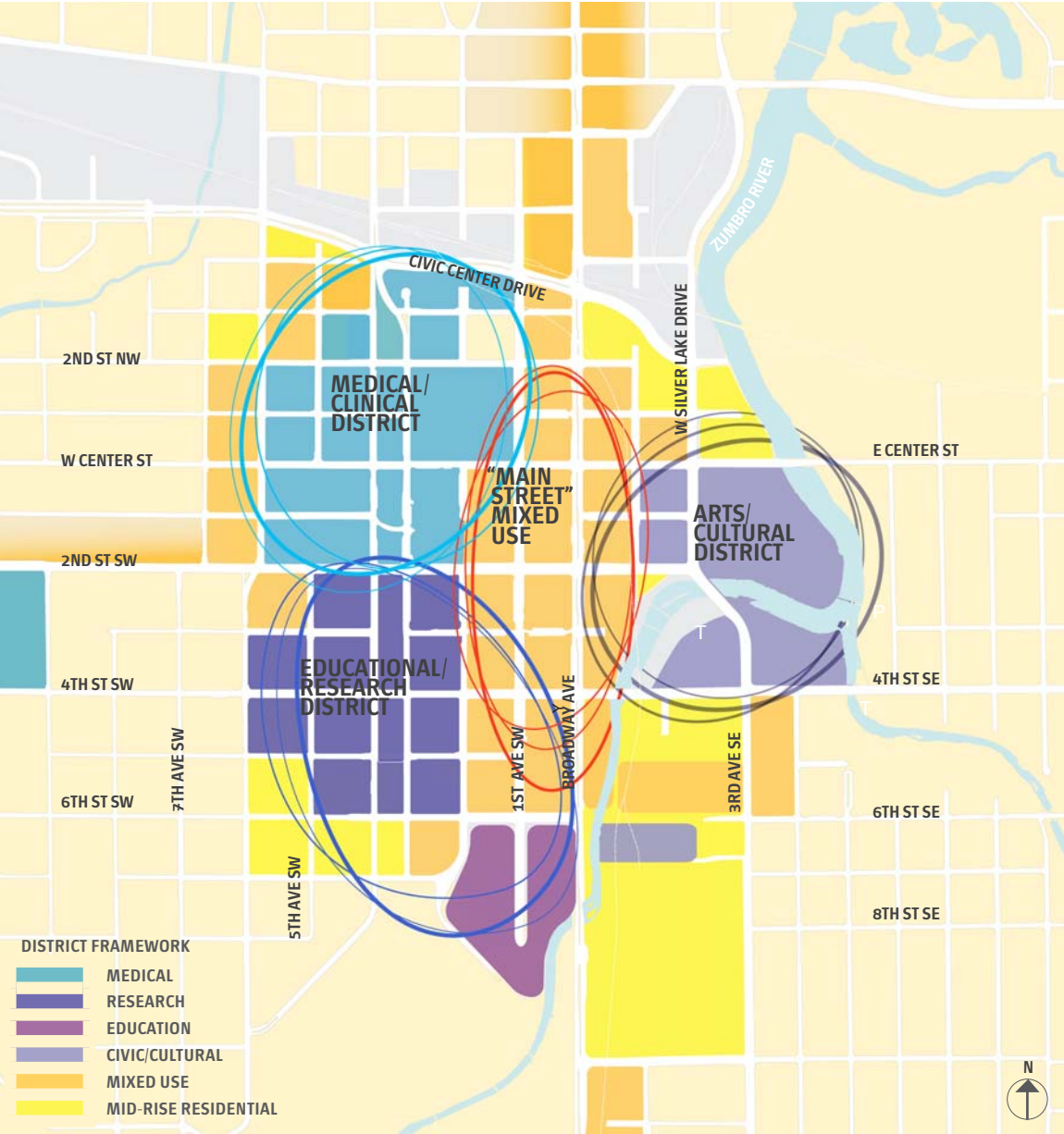
and helps activate the uses in the District. In addition to cultural organizations, this zone near 2nd Street that curves down along the river will also house civic and governmental uses that provide daytime employees, as well as retail and restaurants that support evening arts uses and extend the viability of the district into a lively area in the evening. The co-location of arts uses with other supporting entertainment uses will allow users to extend their stay within the district, and will promote walkability between compatible uses. In addition, a small mix of offices and residential will be distributed within the district to add to the diversity of possible users for the district.

Medical/Clinical District

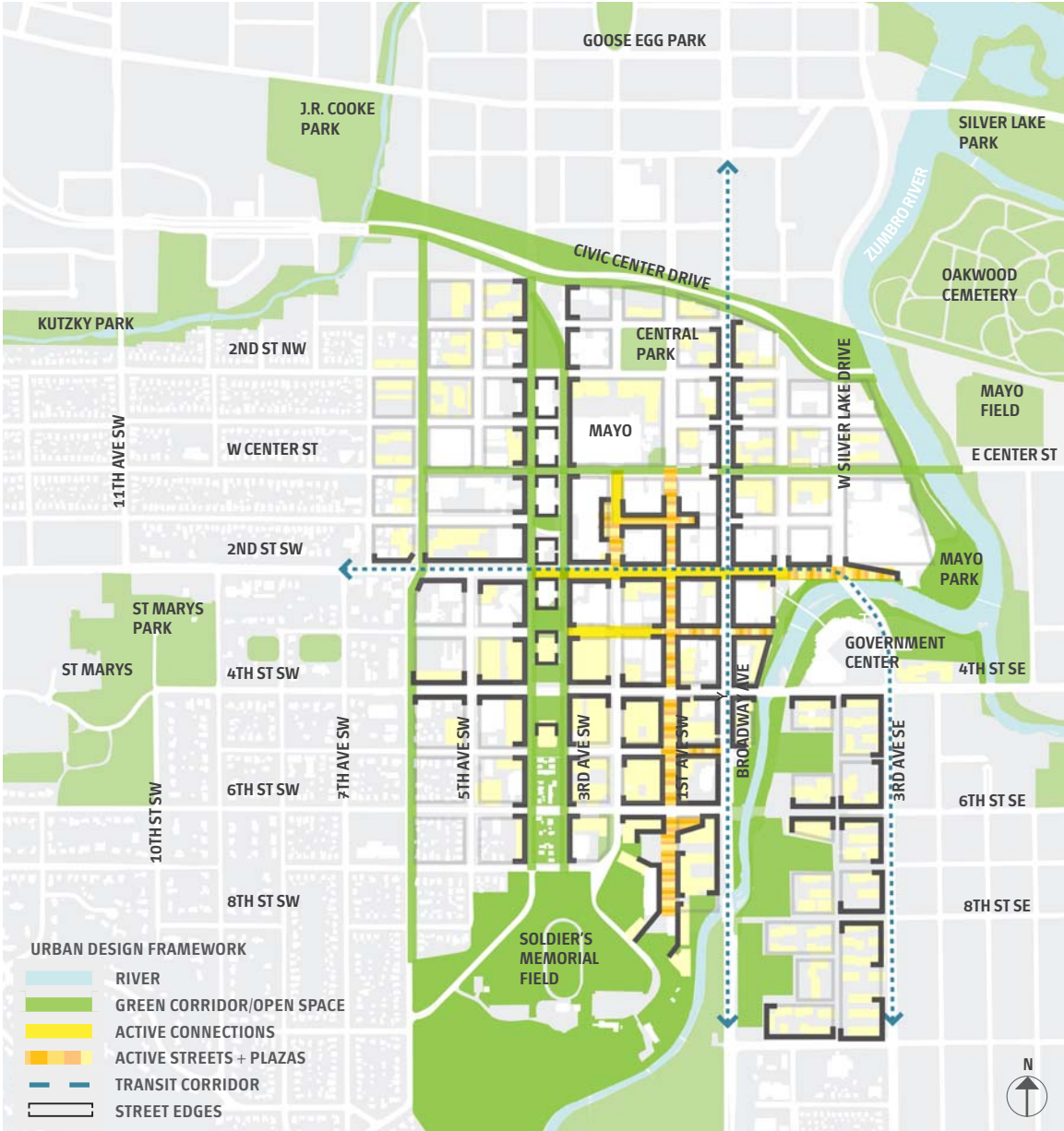
Unlike the other burgeoning districts described above and envisioned by the plan, the Medical/Clinical District is already a well-established district in Downtown Rochester. Centered at the confluence of Center Street and 3rd and 4th Avenues, the Medical/Clinical District is the hub of Mayo Clinic activity in Rochester, and is characterized by an intense density of people and the highest buildings in downtown, which support the active medical practice and research activities that Mayo Clinic is engaged in. The Master Plan supports focusing continued Mayo Clinic hospital and clinical growth in this high density district, with transitional, supporting uses to the northwest and research uses focused to the south. Additionally, while office uses often frequently occupy ground-level uses in this area, the long-term plan is to move these more passive uses to upper floors, infilling the ground levels with public uses, such as active lobbies or shared conference rooms, that lend greater interest and life at the street level.

Downtown Residential Neighborhoods

Downtown is ringed by a group of diverse, established residential neighborhoods; however, the neighborhoods frequently abut incompatible land uses, building massing and height, or zones that make difficult transitions from the downtown, such as blocks of surface parking. The master plan infills these transitional edge areas with new mid-density housing at all four corners of Downtown. This infill housing better mediates between the existing neighborhoods and Downtown, creating better connections to the neighborhoods and providing new housing typologies to attract a wide population to live Downtown. In the long term, the area east of the Zumbro River and south of 4th Street Southeast can be redeveloped into an urban, residential neighborhood as current industrial or low-density uses phase out over time. This new neighborhood can take advantage of a prime riverfront location and provide a gentle, appropriate transition for the Slatterly Park neighborhood.



EACH OF FOUR DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS REPRESENT A DIFFERENT LAND USE MIX



THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK RELIES ON A SYSTEM OF STREETS AND WELL-DESIGNED DENSITY TO SHAPE THE PUBLIC REALM

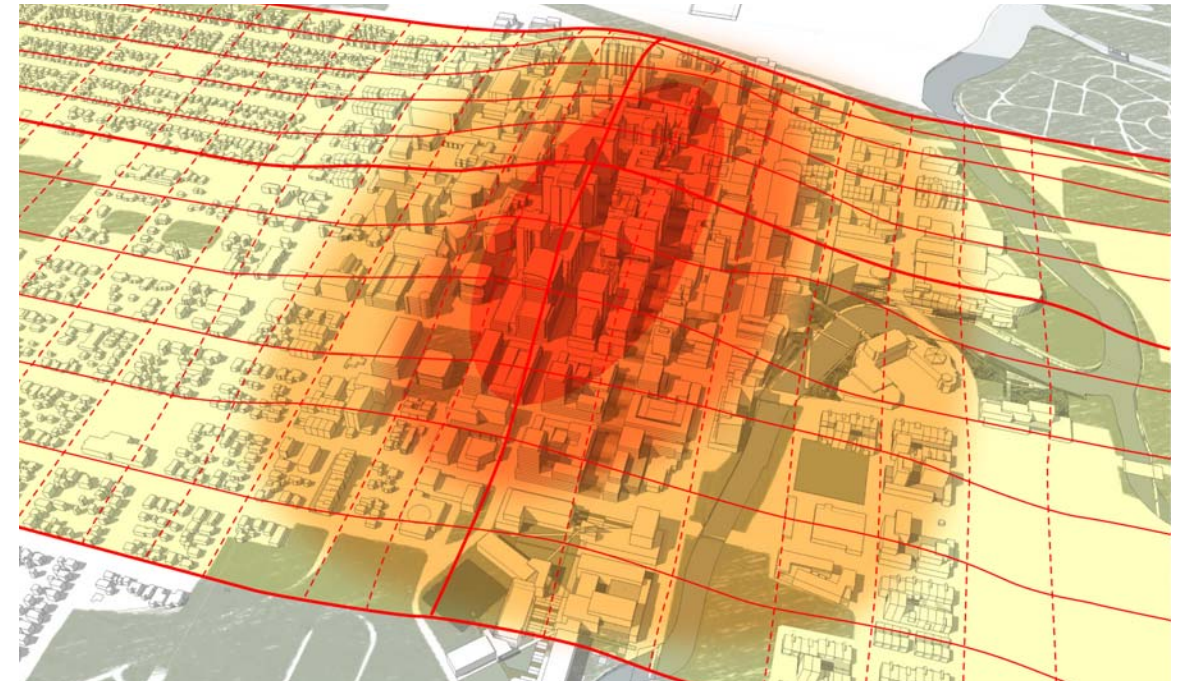
Urban Design Framework

The four districts will focus new development with different urban design and density characteristics. The general pattern of density will be highest at the core—defined as the 2nd Avenue and 2nd Street area closest to the transit and employment hubs of the Downtown. Density will radiate out in a decreasing pattern toward the edges of downtown, varying within each district and transitioning into the adjacent neighborhoods with a lower-scale fabric.

To accommodate these higher levels of density, careful massing of the buildings is essential to mitigate the impact on the pedestrian street-level experience. Towers will be appropriately oriented and broken down in mass to limit shadowing the streetscape and open space. Small pocket parks and plazas within individual developments can further break up the mass of each block and provide additional public space and relief, as well as ventilation and natural light for building occupants. While much of the downtown core—located in the blocks immediately surrounding 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue—is already densely developed or planned for near term Mayo Clinic expansion, there are many future development opportunities in areas with undeveloped capacity, such as in parking lots or aging structures along the Zumbro River, in transitioning manufacturing areas to the southeast, and along the edges of downtown.

Distinctive architecture will reinforce the district’s visual identity, and support the high level of architectural design seen in both the iconic, historic buildings like the Plummer Building and the residential fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. The value of protecting existing historic structures cannot be underestimated, and the plan retains the historic buildings that give downtown and the 1st Avenue corridor its unique character and represent high quality building materials and details.

Transparent facades and ground floors with accessible public spaces will activate buildings, opening them up to the community. Collaborative spaces will be interspersed throughout buildings, providing opportunities for informal gathering spaces and informal partnerships to flourish. Subways, skyways, and building entrances will be better coordinated with street level activity.



DENSITY IS HIGHEST AT THE CORE AND TRANSITIONS DOWN INTO THE NEIGHBORHOODS



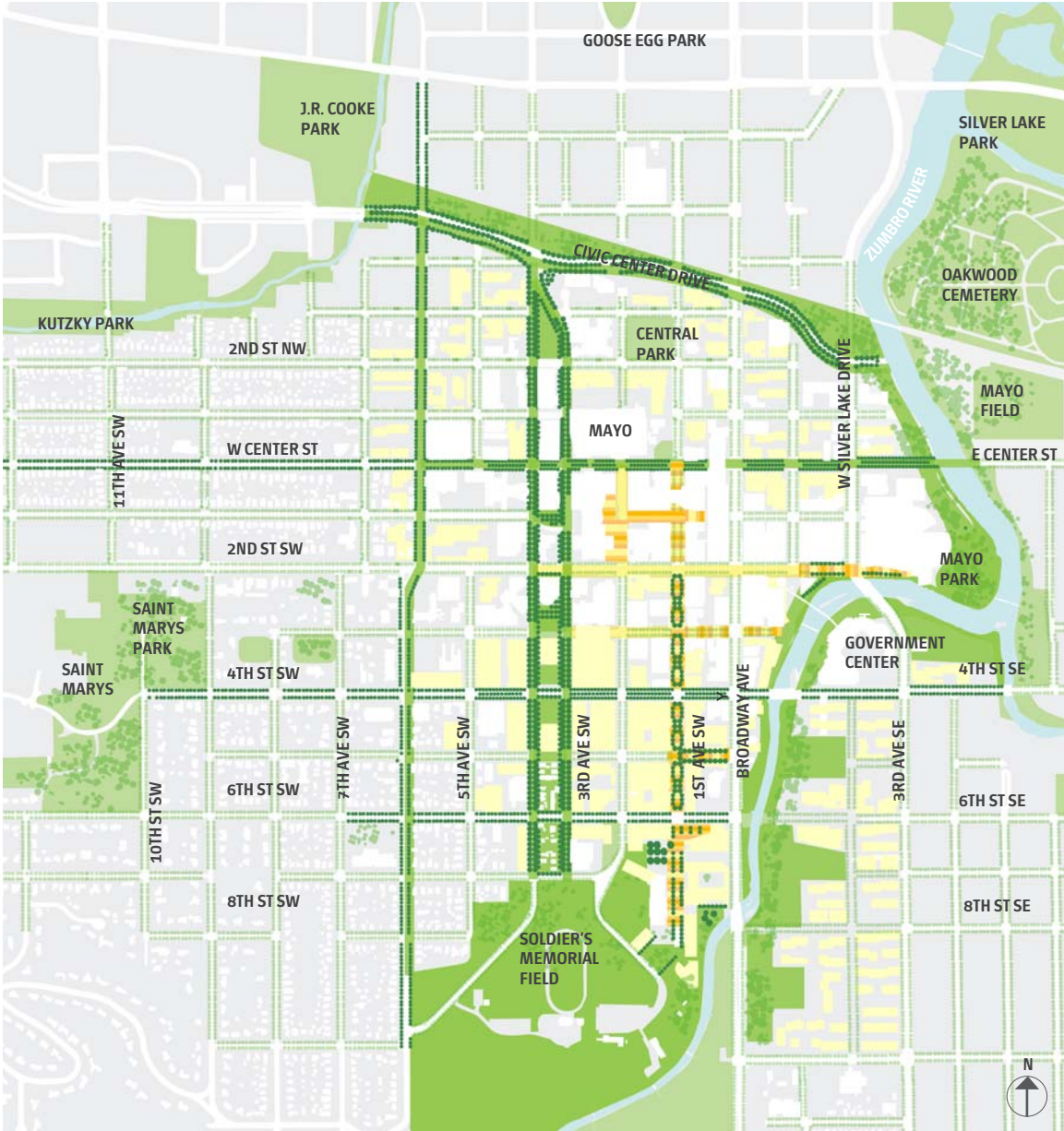
HISTORIC ASSETS ALONG 1ST AVENUE WILL BE PROTECTED IN THE PLAN



A REDESIGNED WATER'S EDGE IN THE RIVERFRONT AND ART DISTRICT



GREEN BOULEVARD IN THE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH DISTRICT



AN INTERCONNECTED OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

Open Space Framework

Parks are defining elements that give downtowns a unique identity while also adding to a high quality of life. They are important downtown amenities for everyone from patients at Mayo to residents, employees, or students. Urban parks can become places of quiet respite from the bustle of the street and activities within buildings, or they can become intense centers of activity themselves, places to meet other people and participate in cultural events. Downtown Rochester has examples of spaces that are successful in both of these aspects, from the passive recreation areas of much of Soldier's Memorial Field to the active programming of events in the Peace Plaza. In addition to the benefits for aesthetics and overall quality of life, investment in parks imparts value to the surrounding real estate and to future development, conferring a better address, open views, and access to recreation.

As downtown continues to expand in population and density, a system of parks and a revived river corridor creates a connected, green loop encircling Downtown that brings respite from a busy urban environment. The loop links together existing parks and the river with new open spaces where the system was formerly fragmented. It brings open spaces into each corner of downtown, improving access for all and creating opportunities to connect one place to another along pedestrian and bicycle trails, green streets, and through open spaces. In addition to establishing stronger connections to existing parks, including Kutzky Park and Soldier's Memorial Field, the open space loop consists of new investment in the Zumbro River corridor and new open space corridors north-south along 3rd and 4th Avenues and east-west along Civic Center Drive between Kutzky Park and the River.

Zumbro River

Although the Zumbro River runs right along the edge of the Downtown core, it is largely invisible to downtown users, with concrete walls and a water level nearly a full story beneath the street life above. The open space framework seeks to soften the river's edge with investment in small scale open spaces along the edge that allow downtown users to get closer to the river. Riverfront reinvestments are focused in the areas between 2nd and 6th Streets, with key opportunities for small, sloped green spaces along both banks—particularly around the tight bends in the river where views can be maximized.

Streets

The design of the streets is a critical aspect of the open space framework. Within a dense urban area, the spaces that make up the pedestrian aspects of the streets—the sidewalks, street furniture, and building edges—significantly shape the public realm experience. Street investments also provide linkages in the open space loop. Third and 4th Avenue are re-imagined as abundantly green streets that connect from Soldier's Memorial Field at the south to the dense core of Mayo's research district, providing a direct link for patients, employees and others to move from Mayo's center to the natural park environment. The paired avenues are redesigned with enhanced plantings and intermittent pocket parks, as development openings permit, which provide visual relief along the corridor and reinforce the atmosphere of a linear park.

The framework acknowledges that Civic Center Drive, Broadway, 2nd Street SW, and 4th Street SW are the major connective streets into and within Downtown Rochester, while 1st Avenue becomes one of the most important, character-defining destination streets in downtown. Street improvements on 1st avenue, including wider sidewalks, generous trees and plantings along the street edge, and bump-outs at the ends and mid-block, create a sense of place that is distinct from other corridors within downtown. The bump-outs and landscape improvements encourage street level activity by creating outdoor gathering spaces and areas for outdoor café spaces along 1st Avenue from 2nd Street south to the future UMR campus.

Trails

Enhanced and new bike and walking trails provide the final element to connect the green loop. While trails currently exist along Bear and Cascade Creeks, the River and the DM&E railroad, there is no link between them or connection to and within Kutzky Park. A proposed extension to connect these two assets is located along Civic Center Drive north of downtown. Additional green space can be infilled in the underutilized blocks between Civic Center Drive and the rail, reinforcing the green loop and improving the overall aesthetics of this transitional northern area. This connected loop will make an open space amenities including Soldier's Memorial Field, Kutzky Park, Quarry Hill, Cascade Lake, Mayowood, Cooke Park, Zumbro Park, Mayo Park, East Side Park, and Slatterly Park more accessible to all by integrating them into a connected open space system.



APPROPRIATELY SCALED DENSITY AND WIDTH OF THE CORRIDOR MAKES FOR A MORE COHERENT AND INTERESTING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL USERS OF THE STREET



PEDESTRIANS ON BROADWAY EXPERIENCE TRAFFIC TRAVELING 30 MILES PER HOUR AND HAVE NO BUFFER BETWEEN THE SIDEWALK AND OUTER TRAVEL LANE

Mobility Framework

Mobility is not a goal in itself, but a means to an end: in this case, the achievement of broader economic, social and experiential quality goals for the City of Rochester. Effective urban transportation systems balance access through the provision of comprehensive modal options and rational parking management and pricing. Since almost every downtown trip, be it by car or by transit, starts and ends with a walk trip, the quality of the pedestrian environment is paramount. Furthermore, the mix of land uses and the relation of built form to the street directly impacts the way people think about transportation options and ultimately choose to travel.

There are a number of key relationships to urban form that urban designers, engineers and transportation planners agree are critical building blocks of a healthy transportation system. Building upon the plan's design and planning principles, these basic mobility principles are fundamental drivers of transportation policy recommendations in this plan:

Relationship of mobility to urban form

Scale is a critical design parameter that determines the size and amount of several important street design elements that are fundamental to how streets are perceived by the user. The scale of a street relates to the proportion of the height of the adjacent buildings, related to their separation by the width of the streetscape itself. When this proportion is too big users can feel overwhelmed; when it is too small there is no sense of enclosure. In corridors that will be developed as important transit and pedestrian thoroughfares, increasing the density of development along the street not only focuses the market but can have the design advantage of improving the scale of the buildings to the street in a way that forms a coherent and interesting corridor.





FOR IN-CITY TRIPS UNDER 3 MILES, CYCLING IS OFTEN THE FASTEST AND MOST RELIABLE MEANS OF DOOR-TO-DOOR TRAVEL



MAINTAINING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS, EVEN WHERE STREETS ARE CLOSED, IMPROVES THE VIABILITY OF NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL AS WELL AS TRANSIT, SINCE MOST TRANSIT TRIPS START AND END ON FOOT

Reliability and Redundancy

While delay is often seen as the most frustrating aspect of travel, it is really a balance of reliability and speed that most people seek. People tend to be frustrated with travel conditions when they deviate from the norm. Well connected, multimodal transportation systems maximize options and limit delay when incidents occur by providing redundant systems and travel paths. Cyclists experience the best reliability of almost any urban users as they can almost always negotiate around an incident and are not subject to travel delays due to congestion. Many cities that have advanced their bicycle networks to serve a broad range of users are now seeing a migration of transit commuters to bicycles due to travel time savings and enhanced reliability on trips less than 3-4 miles.

Connectivity

The best street networks for bicycles and pedestrians are usually fully interconnected (no dead end or cul-de-sac streets) so that pedestrian/bicycle linkages are always well interconnected with few interruptions. Where the street network is interrupted there is great value in continuing walking paths even if road lanes do not connect. From a driver perspective, the most efficient means to increase capacity in an urban environment is a grid of smaller streets.

Price

One basic principle that transportation planners and city designers have long ignored is price, or standard principles of supply and demand. Decades of policy that subsidizes automobile travel have caused a skewed relationship between how we supply infrastructure, streets and parking to accommodate one type of user —the driver—compared with all other system users. This unquestioned subsidy created rampant demand for one type of travel and suppressed demand for others, often with disastrous consequences to pedestrian oriented businesses, neighborhood retailers and civic places designed for cars and not people. This has recently led to an awareness of the importance of pricing the City’s most valuable access points—downtown curb spaces —and of understanding the real and external costs of disconnected suburban land development.

Walkable Urbanism

A wealth of recent research shows that housing in mixed use environments, with pedestrian friendly street designs and quality access options can produce 30-50% less vehicle miles traveled than a convention suburban development. Some have attempted to capture this idea with the terms “urban village” or “20-minute neighborhood,” based on the idea that one could walk or bike to all basic amenities in 20 minutes. Defining characteristics include:

- “Distance” meaning how easy it is to travel by foot or bike,
- “Destinations” meaning the presence of nearby businesses (grocery stores, restaurants, and retail) and public facilities (schools, parks),
- “Density” meaning having sufficient numbers of residents and employees and income to support businesses and public facilities.

Distance

Some studies have shown that a 20-minute walk equates to approximately 1 mile walking at a fast pace; however, the average person could walk between $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile under safe, conducive walking conditions (e.g. sidewalks and short blocks).

To emphasize the importance of short distances for walking, Portland used an analysis area with dimensions of 500 by 500 feet and used the frequency of intersections and the presence of sidewalks as factors in walkability. The analysis also recognized that slopes

over 20% limit walking and biking accessibility. Transit, which gives access to more distant destinations, is also a factor.

Destinations

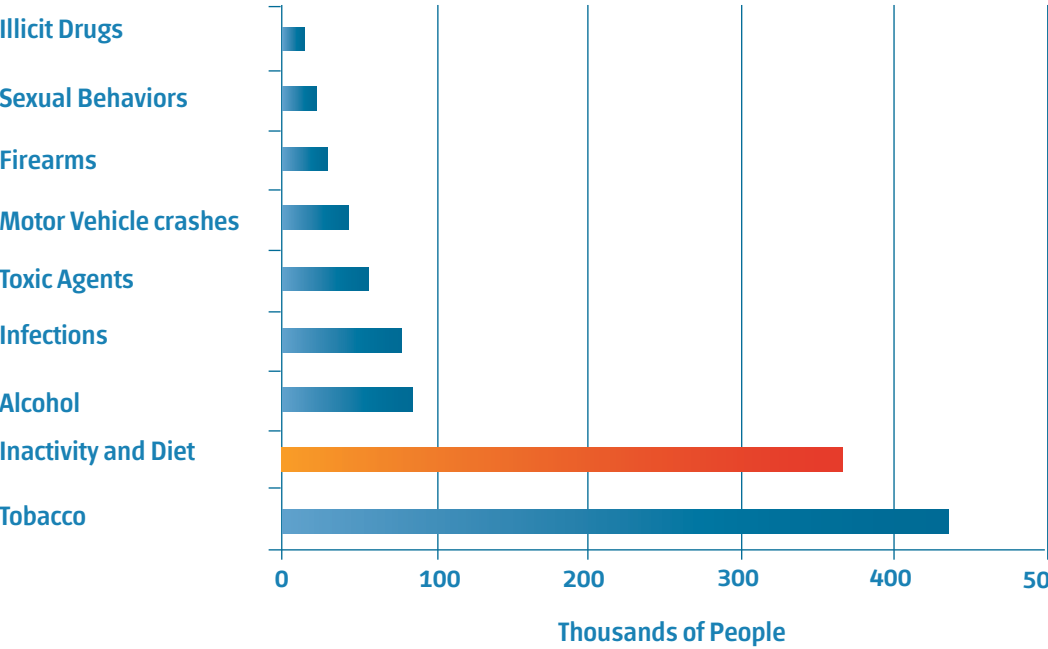
“Destinations” refers to the quality and type of the destination (presence of proximate grocery stores, restaurants, and retail). In the analysis, the following destinations were evaluated: full service grocery stores, both chain and single store operators; neighborhood-serving retail; eating and drinking establishments; parks; and elementary schools.

Density

Density is needed to support the retail services used as walkable destinations. Twenty-minute neighborhoods require higher residential densities than are typically found where the car is the dominant mode of travel. It appears from the literature that 12-18 households per acre is the minimum density needed to support the retail uses selected as destinations.¹

1. Portland Plan: Status Report – 20 Minute Neighborhoods. <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?a=246917&c=46822>

Modifiable Factors Associated with U.S. Deaths, 2000



Source: Mokdad, Marks, Stroup & Geberding. Journal of the American Medical Association, 2004.

POOR DIET AND PHYSICAL INACTIVITY WAS THE SECOND-LEADING MODIFIABLE CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE U.S. IN 2000

Transportation and Public Health

An inactive lifestyle is one of the primary contributors to poor health (Figure on the left). The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association recommend that adults aged 18 to 65 engage in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes five days each week or more vigorous activity for 20 minutes three days each week¹. Although walking for exercise is the most frequently reported activity among adults in the United States² incorporating active forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling into everyday life could significantly improve public health. Of the 14% of all trips that are a half mile or less, nearly 53% are made in private vehicles, demonstrating a significant potential for walking and bicycling for transportation³. However, the environment for walking and bicycling is not conducive to those activities in parts of many cities or neighborhoods.

1. Physical activity and public health: updated recommendation for adults, 2007. Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17762377>

2. Physical activity and public health: updated recommendation for adults, 2007. Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17762377>

3. National Center for Health Statistics. Early release of selected estimates based on data from the National Health Interview Survey, April 2001. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm.

Sustainability Framework

Sustainability is behavior and decisions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs—essentially it is those actions taken now that will help attract and keep your kids, and your kid’s kids in Rochester. The fundamental elements of sustainability are evolving and reconsidered in the contemporary sustainable city where finite delineations of land use and discrete parks have been replaced by a more complex pattern of mixed-use districts, multi-use buildings, and integrated public landscapes.

Building upon the sustainability initiatives the City of Rochester and its citizens have already begun, the Downtown Rochester Master Plan will be a model for sustainability not only environmentally, but also socially and economically. However, having initiatives in place is only effective if there are tangible actions taken to meet the goals of those initiatives. This master plan suggests strategies that are key starting points for increasing Downtown Rochester’s environmental, social and economic sustainability in order to better-position the city to compete in the decades ahead.

Environmental Sustainability

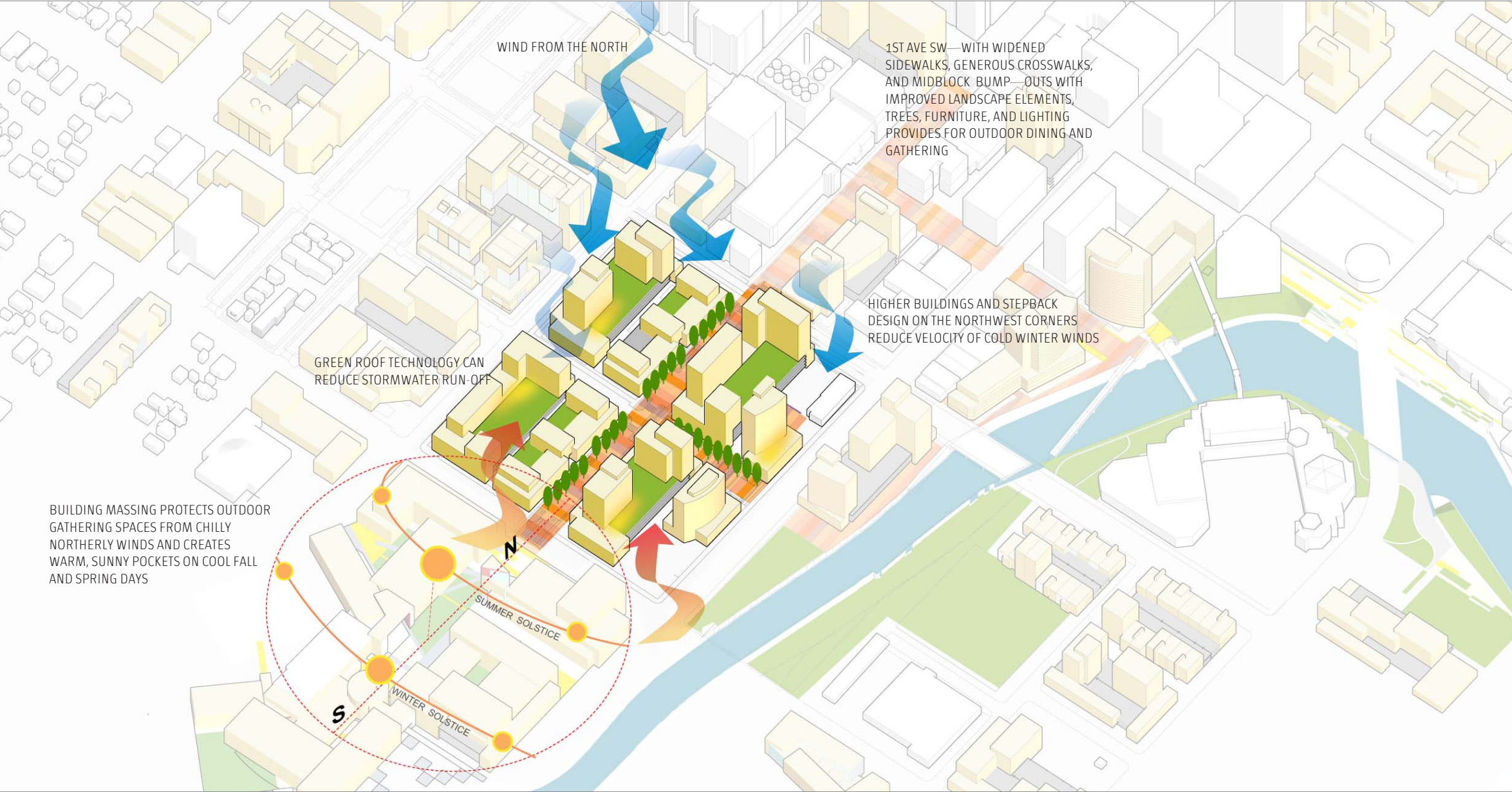
Environmental sustainability in the context of Downtown Rochester focuses on responding to the local climate, creating comfortable outdoor environments, reducing the non-renewable resources needed to operate the city, and minimizing the footprint of the city on the landscape.

The Downtown Rochester Master Plan takes into account local climate, rainfall, and wind conditions in recommending effective strategies for environmentally sustainable development. Rochester is a city of four seasons, with heating and cooling demands that fluctuate throughout the year. Careful planning can help to reduce the heating needs during winter and the cooling needs during summer. Recommended building orientations and placement take into account the need to maximize shade during the summer and sun during the winter and also take advantage of the dominant wind patterns. Public spaces such as the proposed open space along the river and small-scale spaces interior to developments are oriented to receive the cool summer breezes from the north and northeast, while building placement is intended to help block cold winter winds from the north and east.

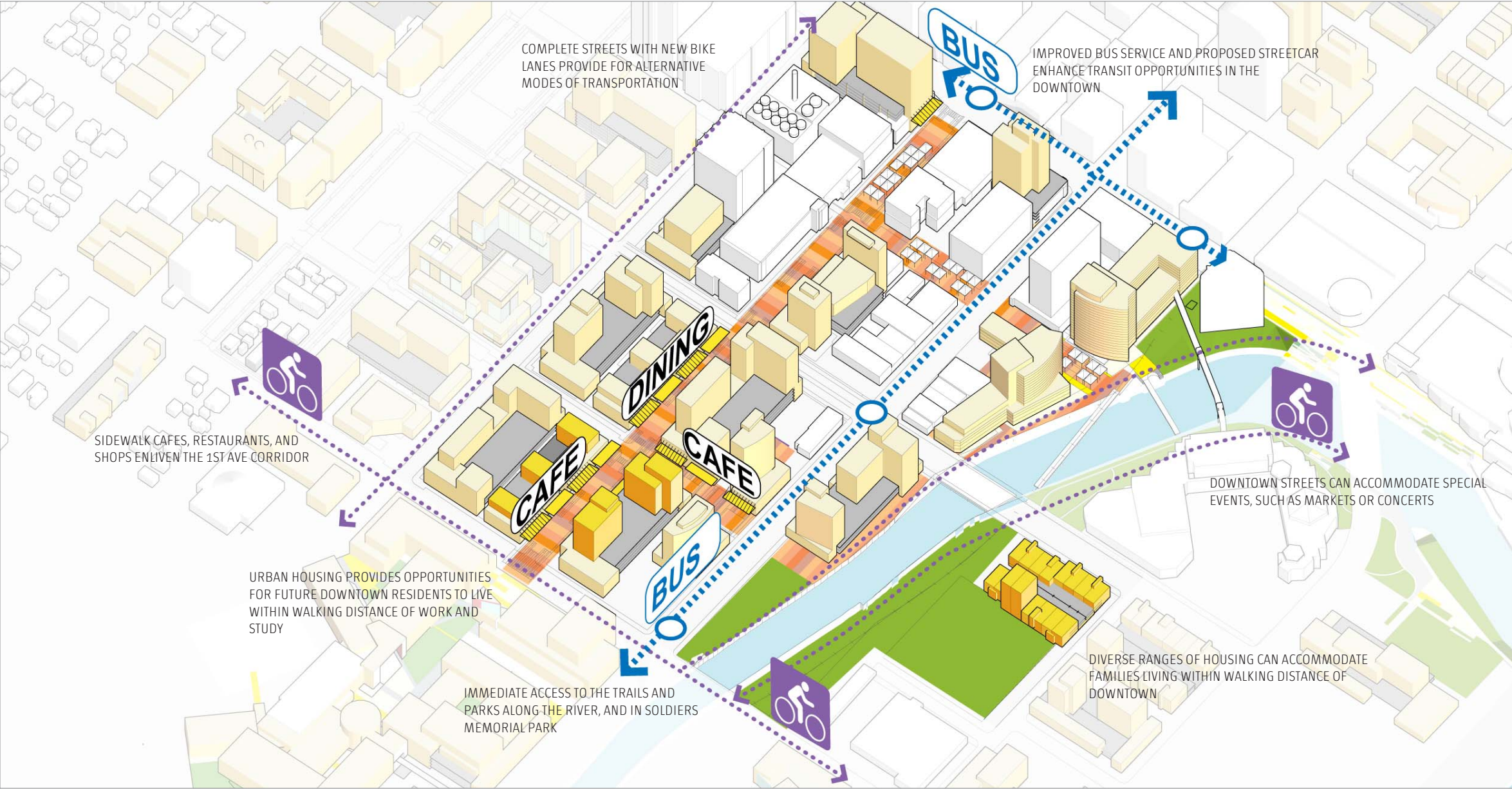
Careful building orientation and attention to shade and shadow affords greater opportunity to expand everyday activities from indoors to outdoors, even in the harsh winters that Rochester can experience. For instance, the plan identifies key streets to make as walkable and pedestrian-friendly as possible in each of the Downtown zones.

While these streets will still allow automobile traffic, certain measures such as planting more street trees, strategic widening of sidewalks and bump-outs, adding outdoor furniture and making sure there are windows and active uses along street-level of buildings can make for a more pleasant urban environment.

Downtown Rochester is typical of many urban environments in that a high percent of surfaces are impervious. While Soldier’s Memorial Field is an exception to this, even the Zumbro River has been channelized and is conceived of as a hardscape. With these conditions, watershed and stormwater management are important considerations for environmentally sustainable master planning. In Rochester, there is an effort in place to integrate rain gardens into existing residential landscapes, and rain gardens will be supplemented by additional strategies to address on-site stormwater management, helping to reduce runoff. Green roofs are encouraged to increase the amount of pervious surfaces, and to avoid the urban heat island effect.



THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK ENCOURAGES BUILDING AND URBAN DESIGN APPROPRIATE FOR ROCHESTER'S CLIMATE



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FRAMEWORKS BALANCE TRANSPORTATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND A DIVERSE LAND USE MIX

Social Sustainability

A socially sustainable community is characterized by an intergenerational and socio-economically diverse population, and by public services that equitably meet the needs of the entire population. In Rochester, civic and cultural facilities, community-based programs, and events are intentionally designed to bring people together, as exemplified at the Mayo Civic Center and Peace Plaza. This plan proposes an enhanced network of Downtown and riverfront open spaces and development of a distinct arts district that will provide more places for both formal and informal gatherings. More sidewalk cafes, focused along 1st Avenue, will also help to bring people into semi-public spaces, enriching the shared experiences of Rochester residents and visitors.

Several elements of the Downtown Rochester Master Plan contribute towards a more intergenerational city. While Downtown Rochester's current demographic is predominantly older generations, the future expansion of UMR and a full downtown campus will diversify the downtown population, and create a more balanced dynamic. More open space and arts and cultural activities are amenities that appeal to the older population, and having an expanded range of downtown housing options gives seniors, new UMR young faculty and staff, and students the choice to live in the city center. Environments are designed to promote social enrichment through learning, healthy lifestyle options, and intergenerational activities that promote integration.

Stronger connections, improved bus service, and more walkable streets also make Downtown life increasingly manageable for a wide range of ages. Municipal services including police, fire and education adequately cover Downtown Rochester, which has a low violent crime rate. Public art, especially by local artists, can create an expression of the community and a forum for common dialogue.

Economic Sustainability

A city embodies economic sustainability by being a place with stable levels of economic growth and employment as well as with a diversified economic base to protect against sudden changes within individual sectors. While Rochester is fortunate to have the Mayo Clinic's strong economic generator within the downtown, growing Downtown Rochester as a destination—a place to live, work, learn, and play—naturally broadens the economic base. At present, there are few residential options downtown and a limited supply of apartments. A key first step towards greater economic sustainability is introducing more housing choices to Downtown Rochester, particularly with the near-term introduction of a full college campus downtown. Not only will this help to build the tax base, but it will also increase demand for small-scale retail and basic services such as grocery stores, markets, restaurants, and drugstores, providing the amenities that residents from students to older generations will demand. These additional uses can supplement the existing office-dominated downtown. The community thrives with a strong economic base that is market driven and serves future generations.

Providing improved mobility options is one important aspect that achieves all three categories of sustainability. The plan proposes an enhanced alternative transportation and mobility network to provide easy access to work, shopping, recreation, and community events and reduce demand on single occupancy vehicle trips. In particular, improving the pedestrian environment and integrating bicycle routes with the rest of the transportation network are all steps towards reducing automobile dependence. A proposed streetcar and future rail is another option for helping people get to and around Downtown Rochester without their cars. Improving mobility not only reduces the impact on the environment, but also brings people together in a diverse social environment and creates an economically sustainable alternative to the single occupancy vehicle.

